

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Fig. 8. This sheet, which includes Figs. 7 and 8 replaces the original sheet including Figs. 7 and 8.

Attachment: Replacement Sheet
Annotated Sheet Showing Changes

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-8, 10, 14, and 15 are pending. Claims 11-13 and 16-20 have been canceled without prejudice. Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 14, and 15 have been amended. No new matter has been introduced. Applicants believe the claims comply with 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Applicants note that the feature of outputting information of classified defect with information on whether the defect is on optically transparent film or not is illustrated in Fig. 11, as described in the specification at page 17, lines 9-13: "By adding information concerning whether the defects are on the transparent film or the non-transparent film to the defect detection results, an efficient selection of defects that can be targeted by an SEM review is enabled."

Claims 1-8, 10, 14, and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Admitted Prior Art (APA) in view of Chevallier et al. (US 6,115,546). The Examiner alleges that APA discloses all the claimed features except the user's entering inspection data through a terminal/computer processor using a computer keyboard as a "communication means." The Examiner cites Chevallier for disclosing the missing element.

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1 is patentable because, for instance, the prior art does not teach or suggest outputting information of classified defect with information on whether the defect is on an optically transparent film or not. As discussed above, this feature means that an efficient selection of defects that can be targeted by an SEM review is enabled. For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 1 and claims 2-3 depending therefrom are patentable.

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 4 is patentable because, for instance, the prior art does not disclose or suggest outputting results of the inspecting of the semiconductor devices by adding information on whether the detected defect is on an optically transparent film or not. As discussed above, this feature means that an efficient selection of defects that can be targeted by an SEM review is enabled. For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 4 and claims 5-6 depending therefrom are patentable.

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 7 is patentable because, for instance, the prior art does not teach or suggest outputting a result of the detecting by

adding information on whether or not the detected defect is possible to review by SEM. As discussed above, this feature means that an efficient selection of defects that can be targeted by an SEM review is enabled. For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 7 and claims 8 and 10 depending therefrom are patentable.

Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 14 is patentable because, for instance, the prior art does not teach or suggest providing information on whether the detected defects are on an optically transparent film or optically non-transparent film. As discussed above, this feature means that an efficient selection of defects that can be targeted by an SEM review is enabled. For at least the foregoing reasons, claim 14 and claim 15 depending therefrom are patentable.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants believe all claims now pending in this Application are in condition for allowance. The issuance of a formal Notice of Allowance at an early date is respectfully requested.

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments
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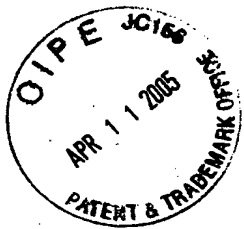
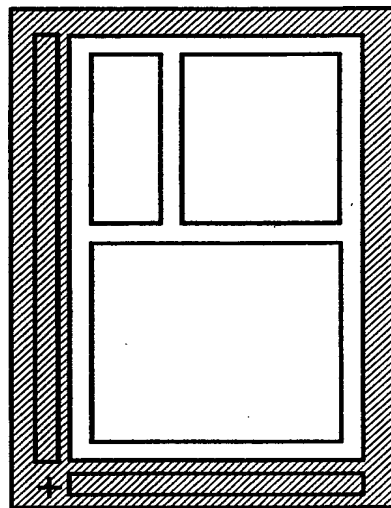




FIG.7



-  AREAS TO BE INSPECTED
-  AREAS EXCLUDED FROM INSPECTION (SCRIBE AREA)

SETTING AREAS TO BE INSPECTED
AND AREAS TO BE EXCLUDED

FIG.8



SELECT PATTERNS AND MATERIAL
THAT WILL MAKE IMAGES EASILY
RECOGNISABLE DURING ALIGNMENT

SETTING THE
ALIGNMENT PATTERN